

# Connections

News from the Hamilton Chapter  
S P R I N G 2 0 0 9

MS  
Lives  
Here  
Help &  
Hope  
Hamilton Chapter

## → Our Chapter Mission

To provide help & hope to persons with Multiple Sclerosis and their families, through advocacy, public and professional education, support programs and to provide funds for research.

## → Inside This Issue

- Exercise - An Effective Treatment Option for MS
- Benefits of Pets are Endless
- Exercise and MS-Books & Websites
- Kids Camp Programs
- Genetic Study Supports Vitamin D
- Spring Cleaning
- Memoriam
- 2009 MS Walk



## Exercise – an effective treatment option for MS

Article from MS Clinic London ON website

Written by Deanna McNeil Bsc(PT) Physiotherapist

Hope for a treatment for those with MS comes from research done in Utah by Dr. Jack Petajan, with support from the National MS Society. The patients in the study who received this special treatment improved their strength, endurance and bowel and bladder function. They had less fatigue, depression and anger. Many reduced their weight to a healthier level. The treatment? It's not a new drug. It's exercise! The results show without a doubt that people with MS at all levels of disability improve their condition and mood with regular exercise.

We all know we should exercise, but

sometimes it is hard to get motivated. It is especially difficult with

MS. Fatigue is a problem. Also, MS symptoms can worsen as the body overheats with exercise. Weakness and fatigue lead to less activity. This leads to more weakness, fatigue and other health risks associated with inactivity

Regular exercise:

- Improves strength (even in MS)
- Improves posture
- Lessens fatigue
- Improves mood, self-confidence and general well-being
- Improves sleep and appetite

- Helps with weight loss and more importantly improves or maintains the level of independence of the person with MS.
- Exercise in a group has the added benefit of support from peers. It supplies a reason to get out of the house.

As a physiotherapist working with people who have MS, the most frequent question asked is "what kind of exercise should I be doing to improve by condition?" The

answer is not so much what you do, but that you do it!

Any activity that gets you up and moving is great. Some people go

bowling, play tennis, or go out for a walk. Others prefer something more structured, for example,

exercising on a stationary bike, stair climber or rowing machine. Strengthening with weights or with the weight of a limb itself is great. Many with MS enjoy swimming or aquatic exercise because moving in water is so much easier than moving on land.

Aquatic exercise is a good way to work out the entire body. Exercising in water between 83 and 85 degrees F. prevents the body from overheating. The water itself is used both for support (buoyancy) and resistance. The amount of resistance created depends on



**"The results show without a doubt that people with MS at all levels of disability improve their condition and mood with regular exercise."**

*Continued on page 2*

## Exercise – an effective treatment option for MS ...continued from page 1

how fast you move. Many facilities have supervised classes for people with MS and other chronic conditions. Most have mechanical lifts so that those with limited mobility can access the pool.

Stretching of the legs is an exercise that should be done daily. Spasticity or stiffness of the muscles can cause permanent shortening if stretching is not done. Research shows that gently sustained stretches of the legs can help to decrease the stiffness. The benefit of stretching is seen over the long run. It prevents contractures and deformities from affecting movement. By keeping the legs stretched, walking becomes less tiring and much easier.

Exercise is equally important to the person with limited or no mobility. Deep breathing exercises help to keep the lungs well ventilated and clear of infections. Gentle sustained stretches must be done daily to maintain the range of motion of the legs and to prevent stiffness and permanent shortening of the muscles. This is especially important for those who cannot stand or walk. Lying on the stomach for a few minutes each day will stretch the muscles on the front of the legs. For those who have fairly good arm strength, arm weights or arm bike machines can be used.

The benefits of exercise in MS are many. Improved strength, endurance and even bowel and bladder function are possible. Exercise lessens fatigue and improves mood.

There are many options for exercise, depending on your interests and abilities. Even severely debilitated individuals can find and benefit from the right exercises. We all hope for a drug treatment for MS. A drug will never be the only answer, however, proof exists today about the benefits of exercise. It provides an opportunity to take charge of your life and learn to make the most of what you have.

### Points to get you started:

- Check with your family physician before you begin
- Contact a physiotherapist in your area who can devise an exercise program specific to your needs
- Check out local facilities for programs or activities that interest you such as swimming or an exercise group
- Pick an activity that you will enjoy doing- swimming or walking or working out at a local fitness club
- Get family and friends involved - exercise is more enjoyable when it's done with a partner or group don't left yourself get overheated - wear light clothing and exercise in a cool environment (remember symptoms of MS can get worse with overheating)
- Don't overdo it - when you feel fatigue, stop and rest or change exercises
- Just do it!! And enjoy the physical and emotional rewards of being in the best shape you can be

## The Benefits of Pets are Endless!

*Adapted from SAM Program Newsletter- Positive Pooching February 2009*

### Pets help people feel better both emotionally and physically.

**Emotionally:** Animals help lift a person's mood. They give you something to focus on outside of yourself. People respond to pets because of their genuine affection and unconditional love.

**Physically:** Touching and interacting with animals can help lower a person's blood pressure and provide stress relief. People with pets also have longer life spans and suffer from less depression. In addition, pets respond to play and activity. Owning a pet will

help you be active on a daily basis whether through exercising, feeding or grooming your pet.

**What is so special about a Pet?** They are present. They accept and are open to whoever the person is and whatever that person needs. It is as if the animal says, "Here I am!"

*Do you have a pet story to share? Write to us about how your pet helps make you feel better.*



# VOLUNTEER VISITING PROGRAMS: ARE YOU INTERESTED?

**MS Society of Canada, Hamilton Chapter has two volunteer visiting programs; One to One Client Companion Program and a Family Companion Program**

**One-to-One Client Companion Program:** Trained volunteers visit weekly to provide social interaction which may include conversation, playing cards or a game, sharing an activity of interest, going shopping, or going to a movie.

**Family Companion Program:** Provide support and assistance to individuals living with Multiple Sclerosis who have young children in the home. Trained volunteers visit weekly to assist parents with the challenge of caring for children while living with MS. Visits may include playing with the children while the parent rests, assisting the family on outings to the park, assisting the family with activities of interest (baking, crafts etc.)

If you are interested in receiving this service or becoming a volunteer please contact Catharine Everets at 905-527-7874 ext 16.

## GENETIC STUDY SUPPORTS VITAMIN D AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL FACTOR IN MS SUSCEPTIBILITY

Researchers funded by the MS Society of Canada have found evidence of an interaction between vitamin D and a common genetic variant which may alter the risk of developing multiple sclerosis.

The research, published in the Feb 5 edition of the open access journal PLoS Genetics, suggests that vitamin D deficiency during pregnancy and the early years may increase the risk of a child developing the disease. To learn more visit our website by using the link [http://www.msociety.ca/en/research/medmmo\\_20090205.htm](http://www.msociety.ca/en/research/medmmo_20090205.htm)



3

## Overnight Respite Program

**Overnight Respite Program** - at the VON Adult Day Centre, 400 Victoria Ave. N Hamilton, ON L8L 5G8. The Overnight Respite Program can provide caregivers with the opportunity of a regularly scheduled break to help relieve the many demands of caring for a loved one. This program is available 7 nights a week from 4:00pm – 4:00pm for \$38.00 a night. Each individual can stay up to seven consecutive nights and the program can be accessed as often as needed. Comfort and care is provided to a maximum of four individuals by 2 Personal Support Workers. Individuals' staying the evening and overnight join the Adult Day Program following the night of their stay for a day of socialization and recreation. For more information or to schedule an assessment to determine that the person's care needs can be met by the program contact Jessica Hollinger, Overnight Respite Supervisor at 905-523-1055 ext. 409.



**Bayer HealthCare  
Pharmaceuticals**

## Books on the Topic of Exercise and MS

Holland, N.J., & Halper, J. (2005). **Multiple Sclerosis: A Self-Care Guide to Wellness** (2nd ed.). New York: Demos Medical Publishing.

Kalb, R. (2005). **Multiple Sclerosis: A Guide for Families** (3rd ed.). New York: Demos Medical Publishing.

Schapiro, R. (2007). **Managing the Symptoms of Multiple Sclerosis** (5th ed.). New York: Demos Medical Publishing.

Hamler, B. (2007). **Exercises for Multiple Sclerosis: A safe and effective program to fight fatigue, build strength, and improve balance.** Long Island, NY: Hatherleigh Press.

Fowler, J. (2003). **Everybody stretch: A physical activity workbook for people with various levels of multiple sclerosis.** Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada

Gibson, B. E. (2004). **Stretching for people with MS: An illustrated manual.** National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Gibson, B. E. (2002). **Stretching with a helper for people with MS: An illustrated manual.** National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

## Exercise and MS Website Links

**MS Society of Canada, Alberta Division, MS ActiveNOW**

- <http://www.mssociety.ca/alberta/pdf/Active/GuideToExerciseForPersonsWithMS.pdf>

**The Steadward Centre for Personal and Physical Achievement**

- <http://www.steadwardcentre.ualberta.ca/>

**National Multiple Sclerosis Society (NMSS)**

- [http://www.nationalmssociety.org/site/PageServer?pagename=HOM\\_LIVE\\_healthy\\_living\\_with\\_ms](http://www.nationalmssociety.org/site/PageServer?pagename=HOM_LIVE_healthy_living_with_ms)

**MS Info Wiki**

- <http://www.msinfowiki.ca/index.php?title=Category:Exercise>

**MS Active Source - UK**

- <http://www.msactivesource.co.uk/livinglibrary/eNewsletter/exerciseandms.html>

## Journey to Wellness

Journey to Wellness is a program where participants examine the physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, social and occupational aspects of wellness, as well as learn how to make healthy lifestyle choices.

Journey to Wellness can benefit individuals living with MS, their family and friends.

If you would be interested in registering for this 8 week program please call Barbara at 905-527-7874 ext 17.

## KIDS CAMP PROGRAMS

Since 1998, the Hamilton Chapter has been helping MS families send their kids to a one week day camp of their choice.

This funding assistance is available to all clients of the MS Society of Canada, Hamilton Chapter who have kids ages 4 to 17. This wonderful opportunity is made possible through a grant provided by G.I.F.T. (Grocery Industry Foundation... Together). G.I.F.T. is a charitable foundation made up of grocery industry manufacturers, distributors, and retailers in Ontario. If you are interested in receiving this assistance please contact Catharine Everets at (905) 527-7874 ext. 16.



# Spring Cleaning

Spring is just around the corner and the Hamilton Chapter is excited to offer (for the 4th year) assistance with Spring Cleaning in celebration of May Awareness Month for Multiple Sclerosis!

Those interested in receiving this Special 1-day Spring Cleaning offer should contact Catharine at ext 16 to register. The program will run on a first come first served basis as limited assistance is available.



## Yoga Class – Spaces Available



We currently have limited spaces available in our Wednesday morning Yoga Class. This class is from 10:30am – 12:00pm and is for lower mobility clients who are using wheelchairs or scooters. Classes are held at the Hamilton Chapter office at 5-94 Cannon Street West, Hamilton. If you are interested or would like more information please call Catharine Everets at 905-527-7874 ext. 16.

Also, we are interested in starting an additional Adapted Yoga Exercise Class to allow more of our clients to benefit from this wonderful program. If you are interested in attending a Yoga program please contact Catharine Everets 905-527-7876 ext. 16 to discuss when you would like this class to be held.

## Spring Cleaning your Medicine Cabinet!

*Adapted with permission from Canadian Health & Lifestyle Magazine, 'Ask the Expert' by Tracey Phillips, B.Sc.Pharm, MBA, Rexall Pharmacist, Spring 2008*

As the weather turns warmer, we begin that annual ritual – spring cleaning. While you're at it, don't forget your medicine cabinet. It might surprise you what you'll find. Every over-the-counter medication has an expiry date stamped onto the label. Although an expiry date of two to three years is common, this date is only valid if the product seal is intact. Opened medications are susceptible to degradation by light and humidity, which reduces their best before date to one year – as a general rule of thumb.

Similarly prescription medications are only considered good for one year from the date of dispensing. Frequently applied products like a cream or eye-drops easily become contaminated and need more frequent replacement.

An annual clean out is just the thing to keep everything you have on hand in good working order for when you need it.

Simple steps to get you started

### Step 1: Check for expired medication

Dispose of expired medications and those you no longer require.

### Step 2: Dispose medications safely

Take old medications to your pharmacy for safe disposal. Flushing medicine down the toilet or throwing it in the trash pollutes our landfills and water supplies posing a risk for children and animals.

### Step 3: Store medication safely

Store medication in a cool dry place, away from light, heat and humidity – ironically not your humid bathroom medicine cabinet.

### Step 4: Create a medicine cabinet checklist

Stock up on essentials such as cold, flu and pain medications. Keep a first aid kit with antibiotic ointment, alcohol wipes, bandages, sterile gauze pads and adhesive tape.

*Just as spring cleaning is annual event so too should be cleaning out your medicine cabinet. For more advice on health and wellness you can visit the Canadian Health & Lifestyle magazine online at [www.healthandlifestyle.ca](http://www.healthandlifestyle.ca)*

## In Memoriam

We gratefully acknowledge Gifts received in memory of the following people and offer our sympathy to those who remember their passing.

Agnes Gowans

Susan Farley

Dorothy Harding

Bonnie Timson

Maria Mavro

Robert Dowding

Jean Williams

Don Roach

Angeline Cameron

Ana Marie Lattuca

Tom Guttridge

Sheila Polan

Ines Dipelino

Sharron Hammond/Rutty

Concetta Leone

Syd Pappin

Ilija Strinich

Peggy Kearns

Janet Pearl

## Support Group Calendar

### REMINDER

Support groups with the MS Society, Hamilton Chapter run from September to June. The Carepartner group runs year round. Please call before attending groups as some meetings meet at different locations throughout the year.



### March 2009

March 2	Stoney Creek Mountain	7:00-8:30 p.m.
March 3	Stoney Creek Downtown	10:30-noon
March 5	Care partner	7:00-9:00 p.m.
March 10	Mountain	1:00-2:30 p.m.
March 12	Waterdown	10:30-noon
March 17	Downtown	7:00-8:30 p.m.

### April 2009

April 2	Care partner	7:00-9:00 p.m.
April 6	Stoney Creek Mountain	7:00-8:30 p.m.
April 7	Stoney Creek Downtown	10:30-noon
April 9	Waterdown	10:30-noon
April 14	Mountain	1:00-2:30 p.m.
April 21	Downtown	7:00-8:30 p.m.

### May 2009

May 4	Stoney Creek Mountain	7:00-8:30 p.m.
May 5	Stoney Creek Downtown	10:30-noon
May 7	Care partner	7:00-9:00 p.m.
May 12	Mountain	1:00-2:30 p.m.
May 14	Waterdown	10:30-noon
May 19	Downtown	7:00-8:30 p.m.

### June 2009

June 1	Stoney Creek Mountain	7:00-8:30 p.m.
June 2	Stoney Creek Downtown	10:30-noon
June 4	Carepartner	7:00-9:00 p.m.
June 9	Mountain	1:00-2:30 p.m.
June 11	Waterdown	10:30-noon
June 16	Downtown	7:00-8:30 p.m.

We have a Teacher's Support Group for teachers with MS working or not. The group meets every other month at local restaurants. Next meeting will be April 7/09, for more information about the group please call Katie at 905-309-1810.

*Most support groups are held in church halls. Please book your DARTS no later than 15 minutes after the meeting ends, the church care takers are not required to wait for DARTS.*

**MS WALK**  
EVERY STEP MATTERS.



be a walker  
be an end to MS. register for 2009.

**Join us Sunday, April 19, 2009 for the 18th Annual MS WALK in Hamilton and Stoney Creek.**

**Hamilton**

St. Mary's Catholic Secondary School  
200 Whitney Ave.

**Stoney Creek**

Saltfleet District High School  
108 Highland Rd. W

**Register Now to Join Us at the 18th Annual MS WALK.**

Just a reminder that registration is heating up and many of our WALKers have already got a head start on their fundraising, but **It's not too late to register and make every step matter!**

Register on-line at [www.mswalks.ca](http://www.mswalks.ca),  
By phone: 905-527-7874 ext. 15

Come out for a fantastic day including entertainment, morning doughnuts and coffee from Tim Hortons, and a free BBQ lunch sponsored by Boston Pizza and M&M Meats. Many giveaways and prizes are provided courtesy of community sponsors.

**Create a Team...Create a Future FREE of MS!**

While WALKing as an individual brings its own accomplishments, WALKing as a part of TeamMS is a sure-fire way to ramp up the fun and excitement of joining the MS WALK and you'll see your fundraising skyrocket.

All you need is one Team Captain and at least three other members to join TeamMS.

Go to [www.mswalks.ca](http://www.mswalks.ca) or call 905-527-7874. Make sure you tell us your Team name and Team Captain's name to qualify for prizes on the day of the WALK.

Prizes will be awarded for: • Best Costume • Most Spirit • Best Team Name

Call Alison Foreman, Fundraising Coordinator at 905-527-7874 ext. 14 for more information on registering a team for the WALK.

**We Need Your HELP!**

**Get Involved as a WALK Volunteer.**

On Sunday April 19, 2009 over 250 volunteers will work together to organize and run the MS WALK in Hamilton and Stoney Creek. We need your help to give WALKers a great and memorable experience.

There are many volunteer positions needed to create a fun and organized WALK environment. If you know any students or young people who need volunteer hours for school, the MS WALK is a great way to earn hours while supporting a charitable event.

Some of the WALK Volunteer Positions include:

- Check-in (training required)
- Set-up crew
- Rest stop attendants
- Route marshals
- Lunch Crew
- Clean up Crew ..... And many more!

If you're ready to volunteer, and have a lot of fun, please contact us at (905) 527-7874 ext. 14 to find out how you can join the action!

## WEB SITES

There are some very good websites for people with MS to access. Try the following:

[www.msforkids.com](http://www.msforkids.com)    [www.msforteens.com](http://www.msforteens.com)    [www.msforparents.com](http://www.msforparents.com)

The above sites are provided through the Manitoba Division of the MS Society of Canada. These websites also offer MS chat rooms that are secure chat rooms.

Other good site are:

**MS Society of Canada** at [www.mssociety.ca](http://www.mssociety.ca)

**International MS Society** at [www.msif.org](http://www.msif.org)

**National MS Society (USA)** [www.nationalmssociety.com](http://www.nationalmssociety.com)

MS Canada has just launched a great website: Ask the Expert at [www.msanswers.ca](http://www.msanswers.ca)



8

*We want to hear from you. Share your thoughts, concerns, inspirations and insights with our Connection Readers. We welcome your submissions –*

- Personal story
- Caregiver Tips
- Poems
- Artwork
- Travel Story
- Spiritual Journey
- Practical Tips
- Coping strategies

**Address your submission to:** Connections Editor  
5-94 Cannon Street West, Hamilton, ON L8R 2B6

**Or email:** [info.hamilton@mssociety.ca](mailto:info.hamilton@mssociety.ca)

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*Any comments or suggestions are welcome.*

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